364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 165 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better. 195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.